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ABSTRACT

This report describes the RAID classroom management system, which consists of Rules written for each classroom activity, Approval given to those children who are following the classroom rules, Ignoring pupils who are breaking the rules, and Disapproval used when necessary to intolerable behavior. Included in this paper are results of using the RAID system, an analysis of the system to be used as a guide for application, some considerations in applying RAID, and some suggestions for a positive approach to teaching. Six additional suggestions and a 14-item bibliography conclude this paper. (PC)

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THE SCHOOL BOARD OF

PINELLAS COUNTY

PUPIL SERVICES DIVISION

"RAID": A FORMULA FOR POSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT*

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INTRODUCTION

We, as teachers and educators want to be positive in our interaction with children. We know that learning can be a very pleasant and rewarding task. Children learn best in a positive situation.

Unfortunately, our concern for maintaining classroom order, moving on to the next learning objective, collecting lunch money, finishing before the bell rings, or seeing that the word is read correctly often causes us to speak negatively, leaving little or no time for positive comments.

The RAID approach for classroom management has been found to be most effective when teachers' responses are positive 80% or more of the time. Being more positive in the classroom means that teaching becomes a joy. Teachers become more energetic and enthusiastic at school and in their personal lives because they are not expending their physical and emotional resources attempting to keep order in the classroom. The children enter and leave the classroom smiling. The teacher has the time she wanted for individualized instruction because she doesn't have to spend it on discipline problems. In short, its fun to be in school for both students and teachers.

The RAID system as developed by Dr. Charles H. Madsen, Jr., Professor of Psychology at The Florida State University, includes the following steps:

A. Rules are written for each classroom activity.

B. Approval is given to those children who are following the classroom rules.

C. Ignoring occurs when pupils are breaking the rules.

D. Disapproval is used when necessary to stop intolerable behavior.

The writers wish to emphasize that an intellectual understanding of the RAID system is necessary, but not sufficient to successfully use this approach in the classroom situation. Each of us has established ways of responding in the classroom environment with which we feel comfortable. Some of our responses have become so ingrained that they have become behavioral "habits" which escape our conscious awareness. We know the difficulties encountered in changing or removing a habit regardless of our sincere desire to do so. We need objective evaluation, not only to point out to us our behavioral "habits" in the classroom, but to assist us in acquiring new patterns of behavior such as the adaptation of the RAID system.

The following material is designed to make the educator aware of the RAID system, its value, and its effective application in the classroom.

RESULTS OF THE "RAID" SYSTEM

The child most dramatically influenced by the employment of the RAID system is the one who has a poor self-concept. He is the child who reads below grade level, fails to complete his work, and displays a lack of interest in school. If asked to describe himself, he would probably say, "I'm stupid. I don't learn things well. My teacher doesn't like me. Most people don't like me. I wish I were someone else." It is tragic for a child to be unable to see himself as a worthwhile human being, but, unfortunately, he has learned through social interaction that he has few positive attributes.

So often the child who lacks a positive self-concept receives the bulk of the negative comments a teacher makes. "John, you're not paying attention." "I told you to get your book out twice." "You didn't get the math problem right." "You missed that word, now go back and read it over." Such comments, while meant to stimulate educational growth, simply serve to reinforce a child's feelings of inadequacy.

Through the use of the RAID system, the teacher systematically communicates to a child that he is valuable, lovable and capable of making positive contributions. The teacher finds herself saying such comments as, "You're in your seat...Thank you." "You have the first two reading words right, that's wonderful! You also have the first letter right of this word. You are really trying hard and I appreciate that."

An important factor to remember is that regardless of a child's emotional or intellectual level, he can learn a new task or fact and accomplish something. A child can take small, sequential steps toward increased academic and social functioning if reinforced for successive approximations which lead to the satisfactory performance of each task.

The positive changes that take place in children when teachers use the RAID system is outstanding, but not surprising. After all, think of how you feel when your principal tells you positive things about yourself. "It is evident to me that you've spent a lot of time preparing this lesson." "I was impressed with the idea you used to get the lesson across." "You seem to have a very positive relationship with the children in your class." Of course you knew these things before he ever told you, but the comments still make you feel good and help make your efforts more worthwhile. Contrast the principal who communicates his appreciation for your efforts to the one who seldom tells you when you do a good job, but is quick to tell you when something is wrong. The children are far more sensitive to positive and negative comments than you are. Thus, the impact of your responses upon their behavior has an even greater effect.

A child's behavior is determined to a great extent by the perceptions he has of himself and his abilities. If he is able to evolve a more positive self-concept through having significant others communicate to him that he is lovable and capable, then he is able to learn and behave more productively. Through the application of the RAID system a teacher is able to significantly improve the behavior and self-esteem of each student.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE "RAID" SYSTEM

Earlier it was stated that rules, approval, ignoring, and disapproval are the essential elements within Dr. Madsen's RAID formula for effective classroom management. A more detailed analysis of the RAID system is presented at this time as a guide for teachers interested in applying it.

A. RULES

1. Rules should be developed for each classroom activity and clearly displayed on the chalkboard or a large poster.

2. The following are factors to be considered when establishing or revising rules:

   a. Invite and incorporate pupils' suggestions.

   b. Keep rules brief and concise.

   c. Use positives statements. ("Work quietly at your desk, rather than "Don't walk around and don't talk to your neighbors").

3. Review rules regularly at times while children are following the rules.

4. Keep the class informed as different rules become applicable.

5. Students will tend to behave as expected at a given time when they understand the rules in effect (i.e. expectations) and the purposes of the rules.

B. APPROVAL

1. Communicating approval to pupils who are following the rules is vital for promoting desirable classroom behavior. In this way pupils learn that approval and rewards are contingent upon appropriate behavior. It is most important that this cause and effect relationship become the behavioral guide for each student.

2. Research data indicate that children significantly increase on-task behavior when teachers increase praise for their being on-task. (These findings have been demonstrated in numerous classroom studies.)

3. Although verbal praise is an effective technique for communicating social approval, other techniques should also be used. For example, non-verbal gestures such as a smile, a nod, or a touch, are rewarding for most pupils.

B. APPROVAL (Continued)

4. The methods of communicating approval to children is limited only by the teacher's creativity and the pupils' perceptions of what is rewarding. In addition to social approval a student may wish to earn privileges and the chance to participate in special activities. Tokens, checks, stamps, etc. can be used as intermediate reinforcers which are later exchanged for rewards. Some teachers have established simulated banks which offer both checking and savings accounts. Special auctions have been successful using items which are donated by the children themselves. Thus, many adaptations are possible in establishing reward systems; in fact, it is helpful to provide variety to meet individual differences and to meet the need for change.

5. How much approval? Take advantage of every opportunity to praise a child for appropriate behavior. The more approval a child receives the more he will stay on-task and the more his self-concept will be enhanced.

C. IGNORING

1. Since most teachers are accustomed to paying attention to misconduct, they often find that it is difficult to train themselves to ignore inappropriate behavior.

2. Most inappropriate behavior can be stopped by ignoring it. However, ignoring misbehavior will only be effective when the teacher is consistently praising appropriate behavior.

3. Who and what should be ignored?

   a. Ignore anyone breaking class rules.

   b. Ignore children not working on assigned tasks.

   c. Ignore children's mistakes (but remember academic errors for developing plans to remediate skill weaknesses).

4. Rather than being negative toward a child not following the rules ignore him and praise his neighbors (by name) who are on-task. The ignored child will get the message and will increase his on-task behavior to obtain teacher approval.

5. An individual may behave inappropriately to receive attention from classmates. Thus, it may be necessary to reward the class for ignoring inappropriate behavior of selected individuals.

6. Caution: An individual may initially increase his inappropriate behavior when he finds he is being ignored. This is a test to see if the teacher will be consistent.

D. DISAPPROVAL

1. Disapproval may become necessary when there is danger of physical injury, destruction of property, or disruption of the learning process.

2. Punishment or threats of punishment have been shown to control behavior, but have also produced undesirable effects such as lowered self-esteem. Consequently this type of disapproval should be avoided, if possible.

3. Mild disapprovals or "nagging" are often perceived as rewards because they are forms of attention. Most negative responses used by teachers fall into this category and often reinforce the behavior the teacher wishes to stop.

4. Time-out boxes or isolation areas have been used to prevent injury, etc., while at the same time have minimized loss of self-esteem. In isolating a child the teacher objectively demonstrates that isolation is a consequence of certain behavior. A five or ten minute time-out period is usually sufficient.

5. In order to overcome the negative effects of disapproval responses, research data indicate that it is necessary for the teacher to praise on-task behavior four times following a negative.

This analysis of the RAID system has been provided to assist teachers in more thoroughly understanding the process of applying RAID within classroom settings. In order to implement this approach effectively teachers need to build upon this outline using their own creative imagination to meet the uniqueness of each classroom and each individual child.

CONSIDERATIONS IN APPLYING "RAID"

The key to the RAID program is positive consistency. Although teachers are able to learn the RAID system quickly, they frequently have difficulty applying RAID consistently.

Also, teacher errors may occur when teachers begin using the RAID approach. A common error is to give attention to a child breaking the rules while ignoring the children following the rules.

In order to reduce the probability of teacher errors and to increase the incidence of positive consistency, each teacher should objectively evaluate her responses to pupils. This can be done in several ways.

Inviting an observer into the classroom to keep a record of the number of positive and negative comments the teacher makes and to examine the rules she keeps or breaks is an effective evaluation procedure. This observer can be an administrator, fellow teacher, pupil services worker, reading consultant, etc. The invited observer should have knowledge of the RAID system and have some skill in identifying and recording the behavior the teacher is interested in having observed.

When it is inconvenient to have an observer in the classroom, the teacher can still objectively evaluate herself. She can set up a tape recorder and let it run during the period she wants to be evaluated. Then, at a later time the teacher can listen to the tape, checking for consistency to rules and the number of positive and negative comments that she has made.

Occasionally, teachers have heard of the RAID system and have employed it briefly without objectively evaluating their use of it only to find out they have not achieved the success they had anticipated. Rather than questioning their implementation of the RAID program, these teachers have made such statements as: "I tried it and it doesn't work."

When the RAID system is first employed by a teacher, she may find that the first few days are more chaotic than normal. The confusion is a result of the teacher changing from the expected behavioral pattern the students have of her. They are confused as to how they are to behave. This confusion is simply and quickly overcome by the teacher's consistent use of the RAID system. The teacher needs to maintain her courage if things fail to work as well as she would like the first few days. By the end of three weeks, after consistently employing the RAID system, there will be marked improvement in the classroom. Students will be spending much more of their time on assigned tasks and discipline problems will be almost, or completely, non-existent.

The teacher's success with the class will be reflected in the eager smiling faces that greet her at the start of the day and say "good-bye" to her when the last bell has rung.

CATCHING CHILDREN BEING "GOOD"

Most teachers take "good" behavior for granted and pay attention to children when they catch them misbehaving. Teacher statements such as the following are frequently heard in the classrooms: "Don't get out of your seat." "Haven't I told you not to talk?" "You know you're not allowed to do that."

Data accumulated from classroom observations over recent years demonstrate that as teachers increase their responses to children being "bad", there is an increase in the frequency of inappropriate behavior. Since paying attention to children who are misbehaving results in increased misbehavior, many teachers are engaged in self-defeating behavior.

There is a positive approach which helps teachers break the cycle of having student misbehavior stimulate negative responses which lead to increased misbehavior. Catching children being "good" and responding to them in a positive manner is the essence of this approach. Teachers are discovering that by "tuning-in" on children who are following classroom rules, and responding to them with praise, smiles, privileges and other forms of positive reinforcement, there is an increase in appropriate behavior.

Teachers, who have been successful with this approach point out that it is important to give positive responses to children at the first indication of satisfactory behavior. When observing a child on-task, even if for only a brief period, respond to him with a comment, such as: "I'm pleased to see you working quietly at your seat, Bill".

A recommended procedure for communicating approval which frequently enhances the teacher-pupil relationship is to emphasize "appreciative" evaluation as contrasted with "judgmental" evaluation. An expression of appreciation serves to stimulate productive behavior while providing conditions which encourage a student to assume responsibility for his own behavior. "I messages" from the teacher which describe the teacher's feelings with reference to a child's specific behavior are often more helpful than impersonal statements which imply a universal concept of "goodness".

During the first week the teacher uses this approach, she needs to be aware of, and to respond to, as many examples of appropriate behavior as possible. When verbal praise may distract other students, she smiles, winks, touches or whispers to communicate approval.

The teacher may feel a little awkward with this new emphasis on praising "good" behavior and may feel as though she is being less than genuine. However, the increased use of positive comments and gestures soon becomes natural for the teacher enabling her to be more expressive and creative in communicating approval. Correspondingly, as the teacher is able to be spontaneous and authentic in providing massive doses of praise, children will become more and more responsive to her.

Generally, teachers are attending to, and giving approval of, student behavior which follows the rules of the school and the classroom. Examples of such behavior, referred to as "good", may include: being courteous, listening to directions, remaining in seats, working quietly, raising hand before speaking, etc. Thus, the teacher is focusing upon rewarding behavior which is incompatible with undesirable behavior.

Consistency in paying attention to children being "good" and communicating approval and appreciation for appropriate behavior has resulted in greatly improving classroom learning situations for an increasing number of teachers in Pinellas County. As teachers have moved out of a policeman's role, they have discovered they have more time to help children learn.

Teachers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Dr. Madsen's RAID system and to try out this positive approach emphasizing catching children being "good". When teachers consistently implement this approach, they find a renewed interest in teaching and in children. Many teachers are now agreeing with Dr. Madsen who has stated, "Happiness is being a positive teacher."

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Here are some additional suggestions for beginning a program for improving the behavior of children.

1. Try to begin with each student from where he is and reward him for improving from that point. If you wait until a child demonstrates great improvement before rewarding him, he may become discouraged and regress. The child who stayed in his seat only 10 minutes the first day he came to your class should be rewarded the second day if he stays in his seat longer, however slight the improvement.

2. Should teachers try to be fair to all students? Being fair usually means treating all children as if they were the same. Individual differences have been thoroughly documented in professional literature and everyday experiences. Children are different academically and in terms of learned behavior. Thus, they must be treated individually. Classroom management will be improved when children needing special attention receive it providing that the attention is given to the children for behaving more appropriately.

3. Make reinforcing statements to individuals rather than the whole class. If you tell the class they have worked hard and someone has been off-task, you have rewarded him for inappropriate behavior. The more specific your reinforcement, the more clearly it will be understood and acted upon.

4. Believe that the children in your classroom are really a reflection of you and your effectiveness. Although some children will be unruly and test you, their behavior will improve if you are willing to consistently apply learning theory principles. Remember, positive reinforcement is much more effective in modifying behavior than negative statements or punishment.

5. There are many reinforcing responses and rewards which are perceived by most children as positive and desirable, and, thus, serve as generalized reinforcers. However, in order to most effectively implement a contingency program of positive reinforcement for an individual child, it is important to know the personal "likes" of the child. If a teacher is able to use reflective listening techniques to personally know her students, she will be able to truly individualize the educational experiences for the children she teaches.

6. Additional suggestions will be included as educators continue to apply the system and communicate their personal experiences for inclusion in this report.

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